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HOSPITALS: Internet access will now cost patients, visitors

NHS charging for Wi-Fi

DAN DAKIN
QMI Agency Niagara

Being able to surf the Internet has made Sharon Feamster's four-hour medical procedures at Welland hospital every month a little more bearable.

But Feamster said if getting web access means paying for it, then she'll go without.

"I feel like it should be free because sick people are paying enough for parking and treatments that aren't paid for," the Welland woman said.

Niagara Health System quietly rolled out a new pay-for-use Wi-Fi Internet fee structure last week at its six sites across the region.

Employees only pay for personal use of the service. Anyone visiting the hospital will. A full day's worth of access will cost \$9.95, while other packages range from \$5.95 for four hours up to

\$47.95 per month. All of the prices are subject to tax. A credit card or PayPal account is required.

"The parking is gouging people. Now these poor people will go in and they'll be gouged again and they'll be left twiddling their thumbs waiting," Feamster said.

The new fees are part of upgraded Internet service across the NHS called iVisitor, which is operated through Cogeco Cable. All six sites now have the new system, which allows the Internet access to work in nearly every spot of all of the hospitals.

"It was free for a bit while we got all of our processes in place, but the idea was always to charge for Wi-Fi," said Derek McNally, the NHS executive vice-president, clinical services and chief nursing executive.



VECTOR MASTER - FOTOLIA

See Wi-Fi on Page 2

Tablet

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UPFRONT

■ COUNCIL

Some compensation for Pelham flood victims

MARYANNE FIRTH
QM Agency Niagara

The Town of Pelham is digging into its pockets to compensate residents affected by flooding earlier this year and taking steps to ensure it does not happen again.

A special committee meeting was held Wednesday night to address the concerns of dozens of property owners whose homes in Pelham's northeastern corner were left flooded after a heavy downpour May 14. Storm water poured into the sewer system, which overwhelmed the Hurricane Rd. pumping station and sent raw sewage back into the homes.

The town was presented a 75-signature petition from affected residents, who called on Pelham to provide "corrective action and compensation" following the incident.

After more than two hours of discussion between residents, council and town staff, petition creator Glen Servos, whose Leslie Pl. home was one of many damaged, left the meeting feeling satisfied.

"It's not over yet, but it's a start," he said last Thursday as the resolutions made the night before.

The mayor and councillors had unanimously passed a motion to provide up to \$1,000 per affected household for the installation of a special one-way valve that stop wastewater from travelling back into a house. Council also agreed to waive the building department's \$210 inspection fee.

Mayor Dave Augustyn estimates the cost to install one of the valves is \$1,200 to \$1,700, depending on the home. Residents who have installed the



Some of the sewage that flooded a house on Leslie Pl. in Fonthill during a rainstorm on May 14, is shown in a submitted photo.

valve since the May incident will be reimbursed.

The town reviewed incentive programs offered by other municipalities to help set the amount it would provide. Funds will come from Pelham's sewer budget.

The eligible incentive area includes Shorttill Pl., Leslie Pl., Scottdale Cr., Stonegate Pl., Station St. north of Hurricane Rd., Lorimer St. north of Hurricane Rd., and Hurricane Rd. east of Parkdale Cres.

There are 130 houses in the neighbourhood, though not all homes are at risk of flooding based on their basement elevations, Augustyn said.

The town is also willing to use its sewer budget to conduct further investigation into the water system.

One-third of Pelham's sewer shed area, 186 of about 600 homes, has already been inspected and seven properties were identified where stormwater is draining into sewer pipes through downspouts and other sources.

While town staff recommended residents be given six months to fix the improper connections, after Wednesday's discussion, that deadline was bumped up to three months, with a requirement to show action within the first 60 days.

Staff also recommended investigation of the remaining two-thirds of the sewer shed area be completed in the spring but, at the request of residents, that was also moved up to this fall.

It will cost Pelham an esti-

mated \$90,000.

It's difficult to say how many homes with improper connections will be found, Augustyn said, especially since investigation has yet to be done "in the older sections of town."

Betsy Matthews-Malone, Niagara Region's director of water and wastewater services, said the region is working in partnership with town staff to "help in any way we can" to address the issue.

Grading will be reviewed around the pumping station, which did not fail but was overwhelmed by volume on the day of the flood, and support has been offered to the town with flow monitoring, she said.

While he felt it was a "big positive" that incentives are being provided, Jeff Wood

believes more compensation is warranted from the town.

The Scottdale Ct. resident believes the insurance deductibles of those affected should be covered, as well as, for those who had no flood coverage, the cost of basement repairs.

He intends to investigate the potential for further compensation as one of a handful of members of a newly-formed committee, also the result of the special meeting, that will work to ensure the issue remains a priority for the town.

All resolutions approved at Wednesday's meeting will be brought forward to council for ratification Monday.

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■ WI-FI

Revenue goes into patient care, equipment

From Page 1

He said the fees are similar to what's offered at hospitals in Hamilton, Burlington and elsewhere in Ontario. Locally, Hotel Dieu Shaver in St. Catharines still provides free Internet access to its patients, staff and visitors.

"The main reason (for the pay-for-use system) is it's a revenue-generator for the hospitals," McNally said. "The money we receive from that revenue goes directly back into patient care and equipment. The public has told us Wi-Fi is a valuable service to them, but we need the revenue to provide that."

Feanster is three and a half years into recovery from major surgery and will have to continue the medical treatments in Welland every month for the next two years. She said the \$10 per day fee is "way too much."

"I won't use it if I have to pay for it," she said.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ WIND TURBINES: PowerBlades

Opening green energy doors

DAN DAKIN

QMI Agency Niagara

They look like giants sculptures.

Their curvaceous design makes them appear fragile. Flexible.

At first, their insides appear to be hollow. Like giant caverns big enough for a person to stand straight up in. But thick fibreglass ribs run through them — eliminating flex and adding strength.

Inside a massive factory on Rusholme Rd. in Welland, PowerBlades has been cranking out these behemoth wind turbine blades since July.

A workforce of 140 people use large cranes and super-expensive machinery to produce one 45-metre-long, 6,000-kilogram blade every two days. It takes three to equip a single turbine, and they must be equally weighted to near perfection.

PowerBlades, and its parent company Servion, opened the doors of its 330,000-square-foot factory to the public Saturday as part of an Ontario-wide Green Energy Doors Open day.

The company's managing director, Dan Dragoman, said Welland was picked as a host city for a reason.

"Welland is strategically located," he said. "We have easy access to the highways, the canal if we need it and we're close to the US."

Less than 18 months since the company started converting the former steel tube factory into an energy-efficient production line, Dragoman said the company would like to hire another 100 workers in

the next two years.

Servion has just launched a new 3 MW wind turbine that uses 55 and 59 metre blades. PowerBlades is hoping the turbines will get popular in North America, which would mean a demand for the Welland factory to add more workers to produce the longer blades.

"Depending on the economic conditions we would like to launch a second line," said Dragoman.

He said government decisions over green energy also play a role in the success of a company like PowerBlades, which is at the mercy of the Green Energy Act in Ontario.

"The political climate is linked to the market because it's heavily regulated," said Maïke Althaus, who handles communications and government relations for Servion. "As an investor, you always need a certain degree of stability. The more stable it is, the better it is for someone who is coming in and investing."

While the message from PowerBlades officials and local politicians was about the positive results of the growing wind manufacturing industry in the region, someone touring the facility Saturday brought up the question of what happens to a 6,000-kilogram blade at the end of its 20-year life span.

Dragoman said they can be melted down for use in concrete, but the question was a reminder that wind turbines remain a controversial subject.

Welland MPP Cindy Forster said she



PHOTOS BY DAN DAKIN/QMI AGENCY NIAGARA

A group of people watch as a piece of machinery opens up to reveal a 45-metre wind turbine blade being manufactured at PowerBlades in Welland.

hasn't heard many complaints in the city of Welland, but knows else where in her riding, where wind farms are being built, there are many who don't support them.

"Part of it is people in Welland

have put up with manufacturing for years and they accept if you want manufacturing in your community you put up with some annoyances," she said. "In Welland, although they're opposed to

hosting (wind farms), they haven't shown any negativity toward Welland for producing the blades."

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Lori and Ernest Poirier, along with their four-year-old son Owen, walk alongside a wind turbine blade inside the PowerBlades factory in Welland Saturday.

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COMMENT

Get going on daily GO train service

GRANT LAFECHE

QMI Agency Niagara

Those of you who are political watchers might have noticed the big GO Transit announcement at Queen's Park issued last week.

It had enough legs to last through the day's news cycle. It was not one of those Very Big Deal news stories, but if you were watching any 24-hour news broadcast, you'd see it while by on the ticker at the bottom of the screen.

But there was a word many of us were hoping to see that never appeared.

Niagara.

Tuesday's announcement was, oh shock of shocks, Toronto centric. A new GO bus terminal will be built downtown. Which, you know, super, if it is needed.

But Niagara finds itself still waiting for Ontario's key transit system to come to the region.

(And don't talk to me about the limp "summer service." It accomplishes nothing.)

There is no silver bullet to turning this place around, but rather a series of things that need to be done. And one of the key ones is regular, year-round commuter GO rail service to Niagara.

There are the naysayers. There always are. They say Niagara doesn't need GO, or GO will make no difference, or Niagara is being a diva by insisting it needs GO. But at this point, given the evidence, given what the business community says, these complaints ring like the whining of malcontents in search of something to criticize.

According to figures produced by the Region, more than 50,000 Niagara residents make the trip to the GTA to work every day. Most make the trip by car. A small fraction will drive to the outermost; GO station in Burlington and ride the train from there.

The absence of a commuter train would add thousands of car trips on our

highways every day, which comes with infrastructure and environmental costs — to say nothing of the pocket books of our commuters.

The fact is Niagara needs GO. It needs it so people who cannot find work here can look up the highway for a job without having to uproot their lives. It needs it because of a labour shortage in Niagara, and employers can actually bring people who live out of the region in to work. It needs to connect the region to the rest of the province.

But despite the studies demonstrating the ridership, need and infrastructure is in place, despite some of our local politicians and business leaders going to bat for GO, the province moves on this issue at a pace that can only be described as glacial. We're told more study is needed. We're told to have patience. The governing Liberals will run down a list of faux steps it has taken that will, maybe, perhaps, someday bring GO to Niagara.

We cannot wait anymore. No more studies. No more Pilot projects. No more promises. We need Queen's Park to get it done.

Niagara doesn't need a handout, but the ability to help ourselves and GO would go, if you pardon the pun, a long way toward that. It's incredible to me that in 2014 we still have to make the case at all.

At the last St. Catharines city council meeting, outgoing Mayor Brian McMillan said he was meeting with the premier this month specifically to discuss GO and that all signs were positive.

But given the successive inability of the Liberals to do what needs doing on this score, I'm taking a "believe it when I see it" stance.

Until then, we can only keep the pressure on and maybe Niagara will finally get its GO announcement, if only to shut us up.

Have a question for the Grant Rant? Send an e-mail to the Grant Rant mailbox at grant.lafeche@sunmedia.ca.

Shipwrecks — Chemical Mar

SKIP GILLHAM

For QMI Agency Niagara

The tanker *Chemical Mar* sustained severe damage while unloading sulphuric acid at Willemsstad, Curacao, on March 21, 1982.

Some of the chemical leaked into the engine room and efforts to combat the spill were not successful. The Liberian-registered vessel was later flooded adjacent to the damage and it was only good for scrap.

The 140.45-metre-long ship had been built at Oslo, Norway, in 1966 and came to the Great Lakes as *Birk* in 1967. It was sold to the Hall Corp. of Canada in 1979 and renamed *Chemical Transport* in January 1980 departing Rotterdam, Holland, with a Canadian crew, but under Liberian registry. It became *Chemical Mar* in 1982 but retained the Hall stack coils.

This tanker did not come to the Great Lakes but served Halco on the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico routes. Following the damage at Curacao, the ship was sold for scrap and arrived at Brownsville, Texas, to be broken up on March 30, 1983.



Photo: Brownsville, Texas.

PHOTO COURTESY HARRY STOUT

#NAGARAVOTES2014: Decline in Niagara voter turnout has 'plateaued' at 40%

Most of you won't be heading to the polls

GREG FURMINGER
QMI Agency Niagara

There are more than 329,000 Niagarans eligible to vote in next month's municipal election.

Most won't.

"People will say they're too busy — and that's not much of an answer," says Brock University politics professor David Siegel.

Our local civic elections guru has studied voting trends over the years. When people are asked why they didn't mark their ballots, the other big response is they give it that none of the candidates appealed to them.

It's how many of the chronic complainers, those people who like to bash city hall or regional council, typically don't bother to vote.

But this is one time they can have a say, by helping to choose who does get elected to represent their interests and keep an eye on their taxes.

Siegel has compiled a list of voter turnout statistics for Niagara dating back to the 2000 election.

"What the figures say to me is turnout is quite low in Niagara at about 40%."

But, he adds, turnout has "plateaued" at that mark.

"We're no longer facing continual decline."

A variety of factors can influence turnout at the polls, such as issues and candidates.

"Nobody quite knows what the silver bullet is."

A hot mayor's race doesn't necessarily translate into a greater number.

"That doesn't seem to be the be all and end all," Siegel says.

In 2006 when St. Catharines' mayor was acclaimed, voter turnout was 27%. The following election three years later, during a close three-way race for mayor, turnout only climbed to 29.7%.

However, when Port Colborne's mayor was acclaimed in 2000 turnout was 29.4% and it jumped to 49.6% in 2003 when the mayor's seat was contested.

Trends over the past four municipal elections in Niagara show Welland, Pelham, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Falls usually have a turnout of more than 40% of eligible voters.

In Port Colborne, St. Catharines and Fort Erie, voter turnout has been categorized as "erratic" — below 35% and above 40%.

Under the Municipal Elections Act, people have right up until before polls close at 8

p.m. on Oct. 27, at polling stations, to add their names to the voters' list. The best time to do so is during office hours at your local municipal hall.

Some other opportunities exist depending on where you live. For example, Wainfleet's voters' list will also be available — to add, remove or verify your name — during the Wainfleet Fall Fair at a kiosk on the fairgrounds this Friday and Saturday.

During the period for revisions to the voters' list, which started Sept. 2, a person may make an application to the municipal clerk requesting that their name be added to or removed, or that the information relating to that person be amended. Identification is required.

Sept. 12 was the final day for applications to remove another person's name from the list.

Siegel's advice to people who will be exercising their democratic rights and want to make informed decisions on election day?

"A lot of candidates are using social media, so (voters) should be getting on the social media sites and making comparisons," he says.

"People should start following now."

VOTER TURNOUT: 2000, '03, '06, '10

(4-election average in brackets)

Fort Erie: 29%, 34%, 37%, 41%

(35.25%)

Grimsby: 46.1%, 47.3%, 44.8%, 39%

(44.3%)

Lincoln: 33.4%, 35.8%, 34% 37%

(33.05%)

Niagara Falls: 40.3%, 47.8%, 41.3%,

43.0% (43.1%)

Niagara-on-the-Lake: N/A, 44%, 47%,

49% (46.667%) (past 3)

Pelham: 42.5%, 49.4%, 48.6%, 45%

(46.385%)

Port Colborne: 29.4%, 49.6%, 51.7%

51% (45.425%)

St. Catharines: 27%, 29.7%, 40.7%,

31% (32.1%)

Thorold: 47.6%, 39%, 40.7%, 40%

(41.825%)

Wainfleet: 43.6%, 33.6%, 43.4%, 49%

(42.4%)

Welland: 55%, 44.8%, 42.4%, 41%

(45.8%)

West Lincoln: 38.8%, 39.3%, 37.3%,

37% (38.1%)

Niagara Average: 39.3%, 41.2%,

42.4%, 41.9% (41.3668%)

— Source: Brock University

Are You Concerned About Your Heart Health and Maybe Sexual Health too?

It's one of those ailments that no one wants to talk about, yet according to the AMA, 43% of women and 31% of men suffer from sexual dysfunction! Sexual dysfunction is defined as the inability to fully enjoy sexual intercourse. Women generally experience a loss of libido (sexual drive) and/or the inability or difficulty in achieving an orgasm. Men experience it as impotence, known as erectile dysfunction.

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LOCAL NEWS

In The NEWS

Meridian Credit Union Awards \$10,000 to Fonthill Resident



St. Catharines, ON
(September 29, 2014)
Meridian, Ontario's largest credit union, presents Fonthill resident, Sherry Bertleff, with \$10,000 prize for winning Meridian's Win Your Way to Savings Facebook contest.

About Meridian Credit Union: With over 70 years of banking history, Meridian is Ontario's largest credit union, helping to grow the lives of its more than a quarter of a million Members, including over 19,000 business Members. Meridian has \$10 billion in assets under management and delivers a full range of financial services online, by phone, by mobile and through a network of 55 branches and 7 business centres. Meridian Members also have access to the EXCHANGE Network, with more than 2,500 no-fee ABMs across Canada and 360,000 ABMs in the United States. For more information, please visit: meridiancu.ca.



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Pictured above is Fonthill Branch Manager, John Wink (left), Contest Winner Sherry Bertleff (middle) and Jennifer Rowe, Meridian's Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer (right).

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Pelham NEWS

THE TRIBUNE

■ TRANSPORTATION

Region to work with municipalities on inter-municipal transit

RAY SPITHI
QMI Agency Niagara

The goal to finally have a workable and full-fledged inter-municipal transit system in Niagara took another step forward last Thursday.

A week after Niagara Region's public works committee agreed to remove the words "pilot project" out of any reference to an inter-municipal transit system, regional councillors approved a five-point concept plan that includes engaging area municipalities on building a region-wide model for all Niagara residents.

By giving staff the go-ahead to continue working with the 12 municipalities, chairman Gary Burroughs said Niagara Region is closer than ever to fixing what he acknowledged has been a "disjointed" system with services scattered across the peninsula.

"Transit is more than just small pieces working together. It needs an overall look," he said.

"Everyone is going to be involved in these discussions and talks will continue to really decide what this looks like and if it's going to be run by the private sector or a transportation organization made up of community players."

The Region initiated an inter-municipal transit pilot project in 2011. At the onset, the region gave \$3.7 million in grants to the Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland transit systems for the purchase of eight buses to be used to connect those municipalities, as well as Port Erie, Thorold and Port Colborne.

The region has provided additional funding to the transit systems on a yearly basis since the pilot program began.

The program was initially set to end this fall, but was extended until September 2015.

Area municipalities would like the region to play a role, not necessarily in operating the service, but in facilitating, providing funding, co-ordinating customer service, ensuring access to social services and providing consistency with planning and economic development objectives.

The hope is to have a functional transit system that would, for example, allow workers in one area of the region to access a job in another. It could also be a key factor in convincing the province to extend daily GO rail service to Niagara.

Also on the GO file, the region backed Grimsby's official plan to protect a corridor along the railway tracks for future GO expansion.

"We have now confirmed what Grimsby wants in the development of their community," said Burroughs.

"It helps protect green space and it also protects the GO corridor. Grimsby, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls are the ideal stops for GO trains."

The region's decision on inter-municipal transit prompted Niagara Falls NDP MPP Wayne Gates to issue a statement challenging the province to approve regular GO train service to Niagara.

"With Niagara regional council committing to permanent inter-municipal regional transit, it's time for Premier (Kathleen) Wynne to do her part by bringing daily, two-way GO train service to Niagara," he said. "Niagara community leaders are united when it comes to bringing daily GO train service to Niagara."

Gates called on the province to commit to a "clear timeline for delivery."

— with files by Rob Houle

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Hockey Skills Hour – come out to practice your hockey skills and learn from a Pelham Pirates Jr. B. Trainer. Ages 10 and up welcome. Shiny rates apply.

COMMUNITY EVENTS & NEWS

Bike City: Great City – Wednesday, October 15, 2014 – 6:15 – 7:45 pm – Watch this wonderful documentary at the Pelham Public Library, 43 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill. Followed by a discussion about how we can ensure that cycling is a safe and appealing way to travel in Pelham Sponsored by the Pelham Active Transportation Committee.

Pelham Farmers' Market – May 1 until October 30 - Pelham Town Square – October 2 Market Bucks Winner: Lorraine Gauthier

You're Invited: Grand Opening of Pelham Fire Station #3 – Saturday, October 18, 2014 – 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at 2355 Cream Street, North Pelham. Join us for the official fire hose cutting ceremony, tours of the facility, children's activities, demonstrations, food & beverages, and much more.



AM I ON THE VOTERS' LIST?



The 2014 municipal election is on Monday, October 27th. Are you on the voters' list? Check to make sure you are by visiting pelham.ca/2014-election or come in to Town Hall (20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E0).

WHAT WARD IS MY WARD?

Did you know there are **NEW Ward Boundaries** in effect for the 2014 municipal election? In recognition of growth within the Town pending development primarily within Ward Three, a re-division of the ward boundaries (which have been essentially unchanged since 1970) was completed in 2013 to take effect for the 2014 Election. To confirm which Ward is Your Ward, visit pelham.ca/news/what-ward-is-my-ward.

WHERE DO I VOTE? WHAT DO I NEED TO VOTE?

Are you unsure where to go on voting day to cast your ballot for the 2014 municipal election? Do you know what identification is required to receive your ballot? Visit pelham.ca/information-for-electors for a complete list of polling stations and ID requirements.

LOCAL NEWS

EVENTS

Putting the heat on a world record

JULIE JOCSAK

QMI Agency Niagara

Thirty-eight feet of calzone, that's what was cooking outside of Roberto's Pizza Passion on Facer St. in St. Catharines last week.

Busy hands loaded cheese, pepperoni, bacon and tomato sauce onto 71 pieces of dough laid out on a 40-foot-long baking sheet, which was quickly followed by the top layer of dough, olive oil and spices.

With each piece of dough

weighing 2.5 pounds, and adding the weight of all of the toppings in the finished calzone stands to weigh more than 500 pounds.

Since reopening his pizza parlour in 2013, Roberto Vergalito has been ticking off personal challenges, dreams, that he has

for his business. Last week, it was setting a new world record for the biggest calzone. The record was established in October 2003 by Mike Wilson and employees of the Loveshack restaurant in New Lafayette, Ind., weighing in at 69.3lbs and measuring 9-feet 4 inches in length and 22 inches wide.

Vergalito hoped to create a calzone between 30 and 35 feet in length.

There will be some slight adjustments to accommodate for the size, but "it will be a true calzone," said Vergalito.

Vergalito exceeded his expectations with the finished product measuring 38 feet 10 1/4 inches by 2 feet by 3 3/4 inches.

He began with a trial run last week where he created a calzone that was 53 inches long by 26 inches wide.

"It came out spectacular," said Vergalito.

ito.

The giant calzone took over an hour to piece together and took about as long to cook in the pizza oven Vergalito set up in the parking lot outside of his restaurant. Once finished, the calzone was sliced up and sold piece by piece with all of the proceeds benefiting United Way.

"I've always been in favour of helping your local community and giving back, which is a major part of anybody's business. I think this is a great way to raise money for a great cause," said Vergalito.

As this dream came to fruition, Vergalito already has his eyes on the next project.

"This is a practice run for what is going to be coming in the new year. We are scoping out an airport hangar for his next big idea," said Nadia Vergalito, co-owner of Roberto's Pizza Passion.

Dr. Kimberly Dobson



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Rappel 23 storeys "Over of the Edge" from the Marriott Gateway on the Falls with breath-taking views of Niagara Falls, to raise awareness and funding for two local charities. Participants need to raise \$1000 to be able to rappel.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION go to: <http://bit.ly/overthefalls> or email Rbom@sympatico.ca



■ **BUSINESS SERVICES:** Welland-Pelham brings in Port Colborne-Wainfleet chamber

Fabiano now leading three chambers of commerce

OREN FURMINGER

Dolores Fabiano is wearing another hat these days—as the figurehead of a third chamber of commerce.

The longtime Welland-Pelham Chamber of Commerce executive director, who in December assumed that role for Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce, is now also executive director of Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce.

"We're all still individual chambers, we're just sharing services," she said.

The Port Colborne-Wainfleet chamber was a one-person operation. That ended Sept. 17 following the resignation of executive director Jackie Jaroslawski.

Fabiano, who has been at the helm of the Welland-Pel-

ham Chamber since 1990, said stakeholders are looking into perhaps staffing the Port Colborne building at Lock 8, on a part-time basis.

The partnership for now entails the downtown Welland chamber office providing administrative, marketing and special events planning duties for Port Colborne-Wainfleet.

"We're going to try it and see how well it works," she said of a six-month plan.

Fabiano dismissed suggestion that a unified chamber of commerce for Niagara's southern tier could be in the forecast.

It's not even up for consideration, she said Monday.

She said the current arrangements are "really about helping each other and ensuring each community has a strong voice."

She said those voices could be diminished if amalgamated into a larger organization.

"You really just can't take a cookie-cutter approach," she added, "because the com-

munities each have their own culture."

Fabiano's new responsibilities couldn't have come at a busier time.

"For the month of October, there's something happening every night."



**DOLORES
FABIANO**

Her calendar includes election candidates meet-and-greet nights hosted by the chambers, Business After 5 events, and the Welland-Pelham chamber's Ruby Awards night on Friday, Oct. 17.

Eight of the region's chambers of commerce converge for Niagara Networks, the region's biggest local business gathering, in Niagara Falls on Wednesday, Oct. 15, at Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort.

On Tuesday, Oct. 21, the Welland-Pelham chamber presents its local economic briefing, at a breakfast being served at Lookout Point Country Club in Pelham.

greg.furminger@sunmedia.ca

Twitter: @GragAtTheRb



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LOCAL NEWS

■ **RECYCLING:** Region asks residents to bundle plastic bags in grey box

Marriage of the Odd Couple

ROB HOULE
QMI Agency Niagara

Poly and Greyce are a match made in recycling heaven.

It's a union Niagara Region recycling officials are asking residents to marry on a regular basis.

Poly is a plastic bag in which other plastics in the form of bags and stretchy plastic outer-wraps are stuffed into. Poly is then placed into Greyce, the grey recycling bin where paper products like newspaper and cardboard go.

This marriage can save taxpayers upward of \$85,000 per year, according to the CEO of Niagara Recycling, which operates the region-owned recycling plant on Kent Ave. in Niagara Falls.

The region recently launched

the Odd Couple campaign starring Poly and Greyce to inform residents of the need to bundle stretchy plastic outer-wraps and plastic bags into one plastic bag, and putting it at the curb inside the grey box along with paper products.

Leaving those plastics loose in the blue box causes a load of problems at the recycling plant.

"If you did a tour of the 50-some recycling facilities in Ontario, you would probably find that plastic bag management is the most difficult problem," said Norm Kraft, CEO of the nonprofit company that provides employment to approximately six to

eight developmentally challenged adults, among others.

"There are three areas in which it impacts the recycling operation," Kraft said. "We have labour, maintenance and disposal."

"From a labour point of view, I have a lot of staff picking film (plastic bags and outer-wrap) off the sorting line. That's not full bags of film, it's the loose bags that are just killing our operation, because the loose bags — people think it's plastic, they mix it in the blue box along with the other recyclables."

"So the very important message is you need to stuff the materials into a bag."

He said employees who have to pull the loose plastic bags and wrapping from the other recyclables as they make their way down conveyor belts at the 100,000-square-foot facility would be better used sorting more valuable materials, such as No. 2 plastic containers that fetch approximately \$600 a tonne.

Film, on the other hand, sells for \$35 a tonne.

He said the loose film causes about 10 hours a month of "down time" in the production line as idlers beneath conveyor belts and bearings get clogged up with film.

While the sorting process catches about 80% of the film along the line, the rest finds its way into a "residue" pile, which the region pays another company to collect.

"So there's three areas where it impacts us," Kraft said. "It's over \$85,000 a year, that film costs us."

Lost revenue is a lost opportunity to save citizens money, said Catherine Habermehl, the region's director of waste management.

She said in 2013, \$8.5 million in gross revenues was generated from the sale of recyclables, which is used to offset the cost of the region's waste-management program.

"That \$8.5 million goes back off of our cost to run our hazardous waste depots, our environment days, our landfill sites, etc.," Habermehl said. "The residents play a vital role in the success of the recycling program, because it all starts with them at their house."

"And that's why it's really important for them to sort properly and recycle as much as possible, because it helps us offset the cost of the program back to them. If we don't have that revenue, we have to turn to the taxpayer, and taxes, to cover our costs."

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He was taken to hospital from the detention centre on the afternoon of Sept. 22 and listed in critical condition in intensive care.

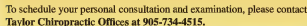


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LOCAL NEWS



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■ DR. KIM SCHER

A friend to the end

MARYANNE FIRTH
QMI Agency Niagara

When Wednesday comes, the backdoor is usually left unlocked.

That's the day Bob Farnsworth's weekly visitor arrives.

It's been that way for nine months. It might be routine, but each Wednesday remains as bittersweet as the last.

Farnsworth, a 65-year-old terminally ill liver cancer patient, is pleased to hear his storm door creak. But the presence of Dr. Kim Scher is a reminder his days are numbered.

The lead physician for the Douglas Memorial hospital palliative care program in Fort Erie is no stranger to house calls.

Scher, with his team of nurses, has made it his mandate to ensure his patients get the care they need and quality of life they deserve. If they're stable enough to stay within the comfort of their own home, he believes they should be able to do so.

But having them stay home carries with it the need for him to keep a watchful eye on each patient's health. To do that, Scher makes weekly visits to a number of homes in Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

His home stops come in addition to the time he spends at the hospitals in both cities, as well as managing his own family practice in Fort Erie.

For Farnsworth, a Port Colborne resident, the house calls mean money, time and hard-to-muster energy saved.

His movement is limited, so having a

doctor come to him is invaluable.

"I haven't had a doctor like that since I was a kid," he says lightheartedly, while sitting comfortably in his favourite recliner.

Scher examines him from the same seat and determines a trip to the hospital is warranted to address a growing side effect of Farnsworth's condition.

The key question Scher strives to answer at each stop is: "Do they need admission to hospital or not?"

The patient's stability is first on his mind.

"Bob has done remarkably well. He's keeping as well as possible," Scher says with a smile, giving Farnsworth a reassuring pat on the shoulder.

Death is not a taboo subject in the homes the 42-year-old doctor visits.

"It could happen tonight, it could happen three or four years down the road," Farnsworth says.

"But they say my time is limited."

Expressing his gratitude for the care he's received from the palliative care team, he says he "appreciates everything that's being done for me."

Despite his diagnosis, Farnsworth's spirits remain high. He's determined to keep a smile on his face, regardless of the rough road ahead.

It's a sentiment shared by Marion McIntee.

In October 2011, the Port Colborne woman was told it was unlikely she'd make it to Christmas.

Continued on next page



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■ DR. KIM SCHER

Palliative caregiver makes house calls to terminally-ill patients

From previous page
Diagnosis or not, McIntee was determined to live.

"Though she's had some close calls, the 58-year-old terminal lung cancer patient still cracks jokes and shares laughs when Scher visits her apartment."

"He's been my miracle," McIntee says of the man who has saved her life more than once over the three years under his care.

The time they spend together "means the world to me," she says. It has been a factor in helping her survive.

"She's been remarkably stable," Scher says.

"Yeah, since you pulled off that miracle," McIntee quips in response.

Throughout the visit the pair harbor — signs of a bond that has formed over the years.

"I love him. I wish he'd stay, but he's got kids to go home to," she says with a laugh about the father of four.

McIntee's spirit is feisty, but her body is weak.

Any form of treatment that could be used to attack the cancer at this point will "break her," Scher says.

Because of their bond, McIntee is not afraid to ask the hard questions. She knows the answers might be difficult to hear, but Scher will deliver them with honesty.

"People really open up to you," Scher says of his patients, many of whom are in the most vulnerable state of their lives.

Scher oversees, on average, 20 to 30 palliative care patients at any one time.

"The load can be quite significant, but more manageable at times," he says.

Some weeks, there are many deaths. Other weeks, none.

Though Scher runs his own family practice, there's no doubt palliative care on its own is a full-time job.

"You can't do palliative care on a 9 to 5 basis," he says, adding it's often a 24-hour-a-day commitment with calls and texts coming in at any given time.

Scher says home care is possible because of the nurses and other members of the palliative care team who visit patients daily to assist their condition.

If hospital admission is necessary, it's a "seamless

process" with the same team overseeing the patient's stay, he adds.

"Our job is to try to keep people home for as long as possible."

Credit is also due to the loved ones and caregivers who assist the patients around the clock.

While many people undergoing palliative care are being looked after by a family member or spouse, Scher says he's touched by how often he sees a neighbour or family friend taking on the heavy responsibility.

Arnold Leslie is lucky enough to have his wife, Irene, by his side.

Diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, he is confined to his bed, unable to move. "How are you doing?" Scher asks.

"Surviving," is Leslie's reply.

The living room in the family's Port Colborne home has been transformed into a bedroom for the 66-year-old.

Scher looks Leslie over, searching for signs his condition has worsened.

"Are you coping?" is his next question.

Irene explains the couple are getting by.

Scher has "been a great help to us," she says, adding it's the care offered by him and his team that has made Leslie's wish to die at home possible.

Fighting back tears, Irene barely gets out the words: "This is our home. It's something we both want."

Since Leslie began palliative care three weeks ago, an open door policy has been adopted. Friends and family are welcomed into the home at all hours.

It's an experience Irene feels wouldn't be possible at a hospital, and she and her husband are thankful for it.

He's not able to say much, weak from his condition, but does express that it has been "nice" to have many visitors by his bedside.

"There should be more services like this available to people," Irene says.

Last fall, Niagara Health System unveiled a \$500,000 renovation to Douglas Memorial that created a shared home-like space that includes six palliative care beds and 12 complex care beds.

Palliative care in the

region improves each year, especially after the creation of the dedicated hospital space, says Scher, who has worked in Niagara since 2006. He previously practised medicine in Manitoba, as well as his native South Africa.

Having the proper space at the hospital means palliative patients don't have to spend their final moments in an emergency department.

"It's not right for them to be there, surrounded by mayhem," Scher says.

It's part of the reason why, when he began his career in palliative care six years ago, he decided to make house calls.

"There was an obvious need," he says. He would like to see the palliative care program expand further.

It has allowed Barbara Albers to remain home under the care of her husband, Mike.

"Let's have a listen," Scher says gently as he reads to examine her breathing in the den of the couple's Port Colborne home.

While it has been "on the hard side," Mike says, it has been good being able to have

his wife at home.

"I'm doing good right now. The care has been wonderful," Albers says after her examination, which reveals no changes in her condition.

She hasn't raised the white flag.

It's a common misconception, Scher says, that palliative care means "you've given up."

It really means efforts are being made to keep quality of life high despite a terminal diagnosis.

Though admittedly difficult, Scher's job is "quite satisfying."

"You can make a real difference... it's nothing compared to what these people are experiencing," he says of his patients.

"When I'm having a bad day, I just think of them."

Scher says he's inspired by his patients.

Despite their condition, many refuse to utter even a single complaint.

"It's an absolute privilege to come into their homes," he says.

"I'm very thankful."

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LOCAL NEWS

■ 7TH ANNUAL NMAS IN NIAGARA FALLS

Deadmau5 surprise visit

JOHN LAW
QMI Agency Niagara

With his calendar open this week, Deadmau5 decided to come home last week for the Niagara Music Awards.

Coming from Toronto to pick up his special achievement award in person, Niagara Falls-born Joel Zimmerman was mighty impressed by the local music

scene's annual party.

"I wish they had this when I was around," said the world-renowned electronic music producer. "The closest thing we had was the A.N. Myer talent show."

Zimmerman thrilled show organizers when he tweeted earlier in the day he was on his way to the show. "Stop by and support your local artists!" he urged in the tweet.

Watching the show beside the stage, Zimmerman said the awards "mean a lot" to the artists. He ended up handing out five awards, including for album of the year and electronic dance music artist of the year.

Zimmerman mingled with the crowd and even took photos of hip-hop artist The KaC Himself, who wore a Deadmau5 shirt for his performance.

"I'm so excited," said show co-organizer Erin Viesentin. "To have [Joel] here really speaks volumes."

Earlier in the night, co-organizer Todd Brown was nervous Zimmerman wouldn't show. But even without Deadmau5, the show would have been a rousing success at its new home, Taps Grillhouse on Queen St. in Niagara Falls.

"I feel we're on the cusp of something." Now in its seventh year, the show remains a pumped up (but not too posh) celebration of Niagara's music scene. Twenty awards were handed out, with singer Cory Cruise, funk rockers Theatre Crisp and Niagara Falls alternative rockers Avenue Inn taking home multiple awards.

Though her band The Mandevilles wasn't up for any awards, singer Serena

Pryne attended to show support for the scene. She has been a regular since the first show in 2008.

"They make you feel like you're doing something right," she said. "(Sometimes) it's hard to know when you're on the right track."

Joseph Minicucci, guitarist for best band repeat winners Vinyll Flux, said the annual show "keeps us young."

Every year, he's "thrilled" to see Niagara musicians of all ages gather for the night, all showing mutual respect.

"This is way better than what we had when we were younger, it's much more sophisticated," he said. "What we could have done with this!"

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More O'Connell in The Philadelphia Story. Photo by David Cooper

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Original Song of the Year: Philip Bosley
New Artist of the Year: Carina Frammartino
Rock Group of the Year: Stereo Sunrise
Best Bar Band: Vinyll Flux

Songwriter of the Year: Kyle Petch
Male Vocalist of the Year: James Underwood
Female Vocalist of the Year: Jane Baker
People's Choice (online vote): Cory Cruise
Folk Artist of the Year: RK Walker and the Little Lines
Producer of the Year: Ruben Arancibia
Electronic Music Artist of the Year: The Status Update
Progressive Rock Band of the Year: Avenue Inn
Album of the Year: Theatre Crisp
Special Achievement Awards: Deadmau5, Ron Sexsmith, Dallas Green



JOHN LAW /
NIAGARA FALLS
REVIEW
Joel Zimmerman attended Tuesday's Niagara Music Awards in Niagara Falls, where he received a Special Achievement Award.

Niagara Music Awards a loud, proud affair

JOHN LAW
QMI Agency Niagara

It wasn't a Tuesday, and there wasn't a curfew, it's a party that might have still be going well into the next day.

The Niagara Music Awards turned seven last week, and while they're still finding their footing, they're no longer a work in progress. Organizers scaled back on the production — and perhaps some grandiose expectations — to serve their purpose: Celebrate Niagara's music scene. Celebrate it loud and proud.

Last Tuesday's show at Taps Grillhouse in Niagara Falls — the show's fifth home in seven years — wasn't the biggest, but it may have been the best. From the performances to the beautiful fall weather to having Deadmau5 in the house, it was a tight, terrific night for music and the people who make it.

Near the end of the night, co-organizer Todd Brown said he felt the show "was on the cusp of something."

Profits, hopefully. Perhaps more sponsorships. Bigger community support. Interesting that we're in the middle of a municipal election and only one Niagara Falls candidate, Lori Lococo, was spotted making the rounds. No one from the current council was there.

What don't they get? The biggest night — by far — for local music, and not even a brief appearance? Maybe next year's show can drop a puck or put a symbolic shovel in the ground.

If anything, the NMAs have gotten better as they've gotten smaller. It hit the ground running in 2008 as a lavish production put on by event promoters Morgan Whelan and Jack Mitchell of Port

Colborne with video introductions and several presenters. The workload eventually got to be too much and they stepped down, with local musician/producer Nathan Chamberland stepping in.

Last year's show, held at the Seneca Queen Theatre, was marred by technical difficulties and a cramped space. For the first time I worried the show wouldn't return.

Two things fell in place for this year: The stage stepped forward as host, and Deadmau5 decided to make a drive to Niagara Falls.

At Taps, the show felt loose and lively, as it should be. Already one of Queen Street's cultural anchors, it offered a spacious bar, wide open space and stage area on the corner of Queen St. and St. Lawrence Ave. It was reminiscent of the MuchMusic Video Awards — with far fewer people, mind you — and its street party vibe.

Deadmau5 was the pleasant surprise. He didn't pop in for five minutes to accept his lifetime achievement award, he stayed for the whole show, mingling and talking with musicians and old friends. No beefy security, no entourage blocking people off. For one night, he was just another Niagara artist. It was a classy display by one of the biggest EDM producers in the world.

Things can still be better, of course. Organizers have to find a way to keep the crowd in their seats to the end of the show instead of wandering off to the bar or outside to mingle. And a bit more pump into the presentation would help while announcing the nominees — a video clip, a snippet of their music, anything. Simply reading the names isn't appropriate for the talent in the room.

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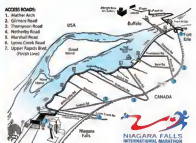
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Daily physical activity is the regular use that your heart needs to continue functioning properly. According to Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines, adults 18-64 should be doing a total of at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity each week. Aim for about 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Activities may include brisk walking, bike riding, dancing, or jogging. The best way to get started is to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Take the dog for a brisk walk around the block, spend a day at the park with the family on the weekend, do some gardening, or maybe join a dance class and make some new friends too!

Along with a well-balanced diet and daily physical activity, your heart needs a check-up every once in a while. Your doctor can check your weight, blood pressure, cholesterol levels and blood sugar during an appointment to see that your heart is in good working order and may make recommendations to you based on the results.

Drinking too much alcohol, smoking and high levels of stress can also have negative effects on the heart. If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to no more than two drinks a day for women or three drinks a day for men. If you are a smoker, the sooner you become smoke-free, the sooner your body will recover. Talk to your pharmacist about ways to kick the habit. Everyone experiences the feeling of being stressed at some point or another, but the key is how you handle it. It may be as simple as taking a few deep breaths for some people, while others may do daily meditation or practice yoga to remain stress-free. Taking time for yourself each day to do something you enjoy is another way of keeping your stress level to a minimum. Find a new hobby, activity or project that you might enjoy doing either on your own or with friends.

Decide to make one change this month and maybe add another next month. Before long, you'll be right on track to keeping your mind, body and heart happy and healthy.

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■ CONCERT ANNOUNCEMENT

Tragically Hip to play at Meridian Centre this winter

DON FRASER
QM Agency Niagara

One Canada's best-loved bands is set to rock the Meridian Centre on Tuesday, Feb. 17.

The Tragically Hip's St. Catharines appearance is part of their Fully and Completely tour.

Fully Completely is the band's third full-length album, originally released on Oct. 6, 1992. Hit singles from the album include *Locked in the Trunk of a Car*, *Courage* and *At the Hundredth Meridian*.

The tour commemorates the re-

issue of the album and includes major venues in the U.S. and Canada, where *Fully Completely* will be played in its entirety.

"Twitter is blowing up this morning, everyone is so excited to have the Hip come to town, Key Melleur, Meridian Centre's director of marketing, said following Monday's announcement.

"The great thing about seeing them here is the intimate feeling of the Meridian Centre — you can't help but feel up-close, and personal."

Tickets for the North Ameri-

can dates of the tour are set to go on sale Saturday, Oct. 18, at 10 a.m.

Tragically Hip was last in Niagara in a major concert at Butler's Barracks in Niagara-on-the-Lake on June 30, 2012.

It was attended by more than 17,000 people and raised about \$65,000 for Parks Canada, which partnered with AEC Live to present the event tied in to Canada Day.

Go to www.thehip.com for the Fully and Completely Tour ticket information.

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Falls flaunting its naughty side

JOHN LAW
OMI Agency Niagara

There were two events being held at the Scotiabank Convention Centre this weekend. In one hall was the national conference for the Canadian Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates.

In the other was Sexapalooza.

One gathered health professionals who know all about bowel movements and colonoscopies.

The other offered seminars called Spanking 101 and What's Up With Toys?

It was clear which one I had to cover.

Well, not quite. Despite their growing popularity in larger cities, sex expos still feel bawdy and taboo that long ago city council freaked over a billboard promoting a sex convention in Toronto. It wasn't until we got our own convention centre in 2011

that we loosened up. If you can't beat 'em, spank 'em.

It started with the Everything To Do With Sex Show shortly after the Scotiabank Convention Centre opened. Organizers hired a semi-nude model to promote the event on Clifton Hill. It wasn't enough — the show did OK, but is now only seen in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

I couldn't figure it out. A city well known for its strip clubs and Vegas aspirations couldn't flaunt its naughty side? Liz Lewis thought it was worth another shot.

The former Dragon's Den contestant and owner of the Sexapalooza retail show brought some kink back to the convention centre with her first ever Niagara Falls show.

"Not every city is open to it," she admits — London didn't go so well. But with steady crowds on Friday and Saturday, it appeared Niagara Falls was game.

Here, people are more

open-minded. Maybe this is a slightly more fun town than London, Ont."

Damn right. The London Convention would have gone for the gastroenterology conference.

Now, not having dabbled in one of these fine events before, I wasn't sure what to expect. Did I need to wear gloves? Would there be whipping?

I was last at the convention centre to cover the Con. This time there was a female oil wrestling show called Super Hero Smack Down. So not the same.

So what's at Sexapalooza? To be honest, I was more surprised by what wasn't there — porn and skeezy exhibits.

For the most part, everything was clean and classy, with some educational seminars to go with the cheeky ones. Things you don't expect to see at a sex expo — a booth selling hot sauce. "This is not a lubricant," one bottle warns, in case there was

confusion.

How about a vapour lounge? Or a chiropractic clinic? Or scented candles? One guy was selling a hyper-allergenic pillow made of shredded memory foam and I almost dropped \$50 right there. You know how hard it is finding a decent pillow?

It's kind of tragic that what excited me most was a booth selling 1,500! It is a sad fact of life that as you get older, things like this are a big deal.

I wanted to buy a set for my girlfriend, Brenda, then realized it would entail the following conversation:

Her: "These are so nice!

Would you get them?"

Me: "Um ...

Ah yes, Brenda. I won't lie — I felt kind of weird knowing that while she was home hard at work, I was taking photos of a girl with Kiss This written across her butt. These shows really are a couples thing. I wondered why I was getting so many weird stares ... it's because I was the guy

wandering around on his own. Taking photos, no less.

If anything, Sexapalooza was too tame for some folks. Inside the Dungeon Room, a guy from Buffalo (asking for his name earned a laugh) called it "lightweight."

Five feet away, a naked middle-aged woman was strapped to a leather pole getting gently flogged by a bored-looking ... dungeon master, I guess.

"I have seen and participated in these shows," he said with dismay. "This is like a demo. I was hoping it'd be more active participation."

I checked with the guy at the entrance and yes, I could participate if I wanted. First I had to sign a waiver and, presumably, strip down. I told him I'd think about it.

I didn't go near The Dungeon again.

I instead passed a booth selling "Sexy Surprise" packages for \$40. The sales lady wouldn't reveal the contents, but said at least two of them vibrate. Electric toothbrush?

A washing machine?

As I left I caught the girls from SASS (Shanny's Artistic Strength Studio, from Stoney Creek) prove why pole dancing isn't just a Lundy's Lane thing. When they invited a heavy set dude to try, I was worried he'd split the pole. Or his pants. Both were possible.

All and all, Sexapalooza is hardly hardcore — more like NC-17. Lewis has turned down escort agencies and massage parlours that wanted to take part. It's a show you won't be embarrassed to spot your neighbours at.

Nonetheless, she wishes there would be a protest or two to live things up.

"We'd get more media coverage," she says. "The first year we were in Columbus, Ohio, there was supposed to be a church group out protesting. It rained that night, so nobody turned out. I was really upset."

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Pumpkin Seeds for Ultimate Bladder Control



by W. Gifford-Jones M.D.

There's an old saying, "If you don't go when you gotta go, by the time you get to go, you've already gone!" Millions of North Americans, if they've never heard this expression, know all too well what I'm referring to, urinary incontinence. Now, Japanese researchers claim that pumpkin seeds are the answer to many urinary problems. But who hasn't carved up pumpkins and tossed the seeds away?

Urinary troubles come in many ways to both men and women. Many women, following childbirth, suffer from weakened pelvic muscles. The complaint is that coughing, sneezing or even getting up quickly from a chair results in wetting themselves and they fear becoming a social outcast.

But more people of both sexes are afflicted with OAB (overactive bladder). They seek relief from daytime and nighttime urinary frequency which becomes more of a problem with advancing age. The result is lack of sleep, depression and often leakage of urine on their clothes.

It's estimated that one in six adults over the age of 40 is affected by OAB, and by age 70 it affects 48 percent of women and 17 percent of men.

The cause for older women is often a combination of problems particularly after menopause. Childbirth sets the stage with weakened vaginal muscles causing, in time, a falling of the bladder wall. But, in addition, a lack of estrogen causes thinning of the bladder lining and thence the urge to void.

For men, urinary incontinence is often associated with enlargement of the prostate gland. Or it may occur following radical prostate surgery or radiation therapy for prostate malignancy. Comments from patients indicate this happens more often than reported because patients who wet themselves are much more aware of this annoyance than the doctor who performed the surgery, and are embarrassed by it.

Conventional medicine can help many female patients by surgery to repair damaged pelvic muscles. Prescription drugs are also available to decrease bladder spasm, but are often associated with side-effects. In addition, oral estrogen along with vaginal estrogen creams such as Premarin or Vagifem tablets are helpful in building up the bladder lining. Unfortunately these helpful remedies are often overlooked by doctors.

But what about "Ultimate Bladder Control" using water soluble pumpkin seed extract? In 1578 a European herbal encyclopedia mentioned the use of pumpkins seeds to treat urinary problems. Pumpkin seeds have also been used by Native American tribes for years to "facilitate the passage of urine".

More recently Japanese researchers claim that this natural remedy decreases urinary incontinence by 79 percent, daytime incontinence by 39 percent and nighttime urination by 68 percent.

But what's so magic about pumpkins seeds? Studies show that the seeds

contain fat and water soluble portions. Researchers report it's the water soluble portion of the seed that supplies the punch to ease urinary symptoms. By inhibiting the aromatase enzyme, it creates a tissue building effect on the pelvic floor muscles. It's believed that this may make more testosterone available to strengthen and build back the urinary tract muscles.

The water-soluble part of the pumpkin seed also binds to the androgen receptor on pelvic muscles cells. This strengthens the female bladder wall to limit the amount of urine left in the bladder after voiding.

Pumpkin seed extract plays another important role in the production of nitric oxide (NO) which has a relaxing effect on both arteries and muscles. This allows for better urinary control. For instance, when the bladder is full, NO is needed to relax the muscles allowing urination. But if NO is in short supply, the bladder becomes hyperactive resulting in frequent urination.

In males, pumpkin seed extract may not cause a decrease in the size of the prostate gland, but by decreasing inflammation, it improves urinary flow.

Years ago no one carving a pumpkin would have dreamed that its seeds contained so much power to control bladder problems. But like drugs that decrease pain, any improvement in either incontinence, urinary frequency or a reduced urge to go, can make life more livable.



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